

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4 to 10, 12, 13, and 15 to 25 are pending in the present application. New claims 22 to 25 are added. Claims 1, 2, 4 to 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, and 21 are amended and claims 3, 11, and 14 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Bruk Gebremichael and Primary Examiner Kathleen Mosser for the telephonic interview conducted with Applicants' attorney, Jamie T. Gallagher, on April 29, 2008. During the interview, the subject matter of the claims that are currently pending in the application was discussed in relation to the rejections set forth in the current Office Action. These rejections are based on U.S. Patent Application No. 6,077,080 to Rai ("the Rai patent"). Examiner Gebremichael and Primary Examiner Mosser agreed with Applicants' position that the Rai patent did not disclose the subject matter of the claims pending in this application.

The Abstract

The Office Action sets forth that the language of the abstract as filed in the application did not comply with required format. The abstract is amended to comply with the required format.

Anticipation Rejections Based on the Rai Patent

The Office Action sets forth that claims 1 to 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by the Rai patent. As discussed above, the Examiners agreed that the Rai reference did not disclose the features of claims 1 to 16. Accordingly, claims 1 to 16 are patentably distinguishable over the Rai patent.

Obviousness Rejections Based on the Rai Patent and the Patton Application

The Office Action sets forth that claims 19 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over the Rai patent in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0032027 to Patton (“the Patton application”). As discussed above, the Examiners agreed that the Rai reference did not disclose the features of claims 19 and 21. Applicants respectfully submit that the Patton application does not cure the deficiencies of the Rai patent. Accordingly, claims 19 and 21 are patentably distinguishable over the cited prior art either alone or in combination.

Obviousness Rejections Based on the Rai Patent and the McGinley Patent

The Office Action sets forth that claims 17, 18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over the Rai patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,030, 211 to McGinley (“the McGinley patent”). As discussed above, the Examiners agreed that the Rai reference did not disclose the features of claims 17, 18, and 20. Applicants respectfully submit that the McGinley patent does not cure the deficiencies of the Rai patent. Accordingly, claims 17, 18, and 20 are patentably distinguishable over the cited prior art either alone or in combination.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that all claims are in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance. If any issues remain, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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